

7. Developmental periods of the individual, as puberty and the climacteric are represented in the excursive magnitude of the curve.

N. E. B.

EARLY SIGNS OF LOCOMOTOR ATAXIA.

Observations made on one hundred and seventeen cases of locomotor ataxia by Dr. Max Karger, of Berlin, give the following results concerning the early symptoms of this disease, at the stage when treatment may be rational and satisfactory. In fifty-three per cent. of the cases there was a history of syphilis. There were symptoms affecting sensation, lacerating pains, numbness, especially of the lower extremities, cord-like sensations about the waist, retardation of the rate of conduction of sensations, and Romberg's symptom, which the observer does not consider due to the ataxia, but thinks it an abnormal condition of sensation. Dr. Karger finds at the commencement of the disease diminution in the acuteness of vision, and a concentric contraction of the field, amblyopia and amaurosis, due in thirty-five per cent. of the cases to optic nerve atrophy. Slight and transitory paralyses of eye-muscles were also present. Insensibility of the pupil to light was found in sixty-six per cent. of the cases, due sometimes to a paralyzed condition of the sphincter, and sometimes to disturbances of reflex action. Patellæ reflex was present in eight of the one hundred and seventeen cases examined. Bladder reflex was often diminished, suggesting tabes as the cause of chronic vesical disease of unknown origin. Impotence was more common than any sexual reflex; and gastric and cephalic "crises," and joint affections rarely noted.

L. F. B.

THOUGHTS ON INSANITY.

The elements of continuance and decay are identical. Conditions determine evolution or dissolution, integration or disintegration, development or degeneration. Function is the essence of vital existence. But function works destruction of its organic basis, even as it works its evolution.

Structure originates function, but reaction of function develops or destroys structure. Insanity, as function, determines its own evolution and evolution of its structural basis; but the very forces of insane function can be turned to work dissolution and destruction of insane function and organic substrate. Here lies the therapeutic power of metaphysical diversion. Vital existence contains in itself the elements of its continuance. Morbid ideas contain in themselves potencies to continue their nutrition. Excitation and flushing of cerebral processes with blood supplies the physical nutrition; introspection and external metaphysical agencies supply the spiritual pabulum.

Whether there is a special set of idio-volitional nerves, originating in the brain, and distributed to the periphery of sense, or whether perceptual or hallucinational insanities have a central origin and reference to spacial distance; or whether it is through local vaso-motor peripheral excitation, we can hardly determine. Several cases that have come under my observation would lead me to believe that the fault was peripheral. An excited imagination, directed to the morbid sense, is the cause of the evolution of hallucinational insanities, for this state of things continues nutrition of the perceptual illusion. Imagination unlocks the channels of vaso-motor activity, and flushes the structural basis with blood; but the metaphysical function, that is, the illusion, shapes the substrate to functionate the illusion.—Frank W. Vance, M.D., in *Medical Bulletin*.

L. F. B.

THERAPEUTICS OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.

ANTITHERMICS AS SEDATIVES OF THE NERVOUS SYSTEM.

A certain number of antithermics act, not by lowering febrile combustions, but by direct and special influence upon the thermic centres of the spinal cord.

Salicylic acid has taken its place among analgesics, having been successfully employed in neuralgias and tabes dorsalis. Acetanilide (C_8H_9NO), or antifebrin, is almost the peer of salicylic acid in the treatment of acute rheumatism. Acetanilide, when employed as a medicine, should